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**Words of John  
Robinson**

**John Robinson**





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## Words of John Robinson

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**Words of  
John Robinson.**

Robinson's Farewell Address to the Pilgrims upon their Departure from Holland, 1620. The Account by Edward Winslow in his "Hypocrisie Unmasked," Printed in 1646.

In the next place, for the wholesome counsell Mr. *Robinson* gave that part of the Church whereof he was Pastor, at their departure from him to begin the great worke of Plantation in *New England* amongst other wholeome Instructions and Exhortations, hee used these expressions, or to the same purpose: We are now ere long to part asunder, and the Lord knoweth whether ever he should live to see our faces again: but whether the Lord had appointed it or not, he charged us before God and his blessed Angels, to follow him no further then he followed Christ. And if God should reveal anything to us by any other instrument of his, to be as ready to receive it, as ever we were to receive any truth by his Ministry: For he was very confident the Lord had, more truth and light yet to breake forth out of his holy Word. He took occasion also miserably to bewaile the state and condition of the Reformed churches, who were come to a period in Religion, and would goe no further then the instruments of their Reformation: As for example, the *Lutherans* they could not be drawne to goe beyond what *Luther* saw, for whatever part of God's will he had further imparted and revealed to Calvin, they will rather die then embrace it. And so also, saith he, you see the Calvinists, they stick where he left them: A misery much to bee lamented; For though they were precious shining lights in their times, yet God had not revealed his whole will to them: And were they now living, saith hee, they would bee as ready and willing to embrace further light, as that they had received. Here also he put us in mind of our Church-Covenant (at least that part of it) whereby wee promise and covenant with God and one with another, to receive whatsoever light or truth shall be made known to us from his written Word: but withall exhorted us to take heed what we received for truth, and well to examine and compare, and weigh it with other Scriptures, of truth, before we received it; For, saith he, *It is not possible the Christian world should come so lately out of such thick Antichristian darknesse, and that full perfection of knowledge should breake forth at once*

"Another thing hee commended to us, was, that wee should use all meanes to avoid and shake off the name of *Brownist*, being a meer nickname and brand to make Religion odious, and the professors of it [odious] to the Christian world; and to that end, said hee, I should be glad if some godly Minister would goe over with you, or come to you, before my coming; For, said hee, there will bee no difference between the unconformable [Noncomformist] Ministers and you, when they come to the practice of the Ordinances out of the Kingdome And so advised us by all meanes to endeavour to close with the godly party of the Kingdome of *England*, and rather to study union then division; *viz.* how neare we might possibly, without sin close with them, then in the least measure to affect division or separation from them. And be not loath to take another Pastor or Teacher, saith hee, for that flock that hath two shepherds is not indangered, but secured by it.



"Many other things there were of great and weighty consequence which he commended to us, but these things I thought good to relate, at the request of some well-willers to the peace and good agreement of the godly, (so distracted at present about the settling of Church-government in the Kingdom of *England*) that so both sides may truly see what this poor despised Church of Christ now at *New-Plymouth* in *New-England*, but formerly at *Leyden* in *Holland*, was and is; how far they were and still are from separation from the Churches of *Christ*, especially those that are Reformed."

## **Robinson's Disputes with the Arminians at Leyden. Bradford's Account.**

In these times also were y<sup>e</sup> great troubls raised by y<sup>e</sup> Arminians, who, as they greatly molested y<sup>e</sup> whole state so this citie in particuler, in which was y<sup>e</sup> cheefe universitie; so as ther were dayly & hote disputis in y<sup>e</sup> schooles ther aboute; and. as y<sup>e</sup> students & other lerned were devided in their oppinions hearin, so were y<sup>e</sup> 2. professors or devinitie readers them selves; the one daly teaching for it, y<sup>e</sup> other against it. Which grew to that pass, that few of the discipls of y<sup>e</sup> one would hear y<sup>e</sup> other teach. But M<sup>r</sup>. Robinson, though he taught thrise a weeke him selfe, & write sundrie books, besids his manyfould pains otherwise, yet he went constantly to hear ther readings, and heard y<sup>e</sup> one as well as y<sup>e</sup> other; by which means he was so well grounded in y<sup>e</sup> controversie, and saw y<sup>e</sup> force of all their arguments, and knew y<sup>e</sup> shifts of ye adversarie, and being him selfe very able, none was fitter to buckle with them then him selfe, as appered by sundrie disputis; so as he begane to be terrible to y<sup>e</sup> Arminians; which made Episcopius (y<sup>e</sup> Arminian professor) to put forth his best stringth, and set forth sundrie Theses, which by publick dispute he would defend against all men. Now Poliander ye other professor, and y<sup>e</sup> cheefe preachers of y<sup>e</sup> citie, desired M<sup>r</sup>. Robinson to dispute against him; but he was loath, being a stranger; yet the other did importune him, and tould him y<sup>e</sup> such was ye abilitie and nimblnes of y<sup>e</sup> adversarie, that y<sup>e</sup> truth would suffer if he did not help them. So as he condesended, & prepared him selfe against the time; and when y<sup>e</sup> day came, the Lord did so help him to defend y<sup>e</sup> truth & foyle this adversarie, as he put him to an apparent nonplus, in this great & publike audience. And y<sup>e</sup> like he did a 2. or 3. time, upon such like occasions. The which as it caused many to praise God y<sup>t</sup> the trueth had so famous victory, so it procured him much honour & respecte from those lerned men & others which loved y<sup>e</sup> trueth.



**Seven Articles which the Church of Leyden sent to the Council of England to be considered of, in respect of their Judgements: occasioned about their going to Virginia..** [*Date before Nov., 1617; spelling modernized.*]

1. To the Confession of Faith published in the name of the Church of England, and to every *Article* thereof; we do (with the Reformed Churches where we live, and also elsewhere) assent wholly.

2. As we do acknowledge the Doctrine of Faith there taught; so do we, the fruits and effects of the same Doctrine, to the begetting of saving faith in thousands in the land, Conformists and Reformists, as they are called: with whom also, as with our brethren, we do desire to keep spiritual communion in peace; and will practice in our parts all lawful things.

3. The King's Majesty we acknowledge for Supreme Governor in his Dominions in all causes, and over all persons: and that none may decline or appeal from his authority or judgement in any cause whatsoever: but that in all things obedience is due unto him; either active, if the thing commanded be not against GOD'S Word; or passive, if it be, except pardon can be obtained.

4. We judge it lawful for His Majesty to appoint Bishops Civil Overseers or Officers in authority under him in the several Provinces, Dioceses, Congregations, or Parishes, to oversee the Churches, and govern them civilly according to the laws of the land: unto whom, they are, in all things, to give an account; and by them, to be ordered according to godliness.

5. The authority of the present Bishops in the land, we do acknowledge so far forth as the same is indeed derived from His Majesty unto them; and as they proceed in his name: whom we will also therein honour in all things; and him, in them.

6. We believe that no Synod, Classes, Convocation, or Assembly of Ecclesiastical Officers hath any power or authority at all but as the same by the Magistrate given unto them.

7. Lastly, we desire to give unto all Superiors due honour, to preserve the unity of the Spirit with all that fear GOD, to have peace with all men What in us lieth, and wherein we err to be instructed by any.

Subscribed by John Robinson and William Brewster.



## LETTER TO SIR EDWIN SANDYS.

Righte Wor<sup>pl</sup>:

Our humble duties remembered, in our owne, our messengers, and our churches name, with all thankfull acknowledgme of your singuler love, expressing itselfe, as otherwise, so more spetially in your great care and earnest endeavor of our good in this weightie bussines aboute Virginia, which ye less able we are to requite, we shall thinke our selves the more bound to comend in our prayers unto God for recompense; whom as for y<sup>e</sup> presente you rightly behould in our indeavors, so shall we not be wanting on our parts (the same God assisting us) to returne all answerable fruite, and respecte unto y<sup>e</sup> labour of your love bestowed upon us. We have with y<sup>e</sup> best speed and consideration withall that we could, sett downe our requests in writing, subscribed, as you willed, w<sup>th</sup> the hands of y<sup>e</sup> greatest parte of our congregation, and have sente y<sup>e</sup> same unto y<sup>e</sup> Counsell by our agente, & a deacon of our church, John Carver, unto whom we have also requested a gentleman of our company to adyone him selfe; to the care & discretion of which two, we doe referr y<sup>e</sup> prosecuting of y<sup>e</sup> bussines. Now we perswade our selves Right Wor<sup>pp</sup>: that we need not provoke your godly & loving minde to any further or more tender care of us, since you have pleased so farr to interest us in your selfe, that, under God, above all persons and things in the world, we relye upon you, expecting the care of your love, counsell of your wisdome, & the help & countenance of your authority. Notwithstanding, for your encouragme in y<sup>e</sup> worke, so farr as probabilities may leade, we will not forbear to mention these instances of indusmente.

1. We verly beleve & trust y<sup>e</sup> Lord is with us, unto whom & whose service we have given our selves in many trialls; and that he will graciously prosper our indeavours according to y<sup>e</sup> simplicitie of our harts therin.

2<sup>ly</sup>. We are well weaned from y<sup>e</sup> delicate milke of our mother countrie, and enured to y<sup>e</sup> difficulties of a strange and hard land, which yet in a great parte we have by patience overcome.

3<sup>ly</sup>. The people are for the body of them, industrious, & frugall, we thinke we may safly say, as any company of people in the world.

4<sup>ly</sup>. We are knite together as a body in a most stricte & sacred bond and covenante of the Lord, of the violation whereof we make great conscience, and by vertue whereof we doe hould our selves straitly tied to all care of each others good, and of y<sup>e</sup> whole by every one and so mutually.



5. Lastly, it is not with us as with other men, whom small things can discourage, or small discontentments cause to wish them selves at home againe. We knowe our entertainente in England, and in Holland; we shall much prejudice both our arts & means by removall who, if we should be driven to returne, we should not hope to recover our present helps and comforts, neither indeed looke ever, for our selves, to attaine unto y<sup>e</sup> like in any other place during our lives, w<sup>ch</sup> are now drawing towards their periods.

These motives we have been bould to tender unto you, which you in your wisdom may also imparte to any other our wor<sup>PP</sup> freinds of y<sup>e</sup> Counsell with you; of all whose godly disposition and loving towards our despised persons, we are most glad, and shall not faile by all good means to continue & increase y<sup>e</sup> same. We will not be further troublesome, but doe, with y<sup>e</sup> renewed remembrance of our humble duties to your Wor<sup>PP</sup>: and (so farr as in modestie we may be bould) to any other of our wellwillers of the Counsell with you, we take our leaves, committing your persons and counsels to y<sup>e</sup> guidance and direction of the Almighty.

Yours much bounden in all duty,

Leyden, Desem: 15.  
An<sup>o</sup>: 1617.

John Robinson,  
William Brewster.



## Letter to Sir John Wolstenholme.

Right Wor<sup>pl</sup>: with due acknowledgmente of our thankfullnes for your singular care & pains in the bussines of Virginia, for our, & we hope, the commone good, we doe remember our humble dutys unto you, and have sent inclosed, as is required, a further explanation of our judgments in the 3. points specified by some of his majesties Hon<sup>bl</sup> Privie Counsell; and though it be greevius unto us that such unjust insinuations are made against us, yet we are most glad of y<sup>e</sup> occasion of making our just purgation unto so honourable personages. The declarations we have sent inclosed, the one more breefe & generall, which we thinke y<sup>e</sup> fitter to be presented; the other something more large, and in which we express some smale accidentall differences, which if it seeme good unto you and other of our wor<sup>pl</sup> freinds, you may send in stead of y<sup>e</sup> former. Our prayers unto God is, y<sup>t</sup> your Wor<sup>pp</sup> may see the frute of your worthy endeaours, which on our parts we shall not faile to furdur by all good means in us. And so praing y<sup>t</sup> you would please with y<sup>e</sup> convenientest speed y<sup>t</sup> may be, to give us knowledge of ye success of y<sup>e</sup> bussines with his majesties Privie Counsell, and accordingly what your further pleasure is, either for our direction or furtherance in y<sup>e</sup> same, so we rest

Your Wor<sup>pp</sup> in all duty,

John Robinson,

William Brewster.

Leyden, Jan: 27.

An<sup>o</sup>: 1617. old stile. [1618]

*The first breefe note was this.*

Touching y<sup>e</sup> Ecclesiasticall ministrie, namly of pastores for teaching, elders for ruling, & deacons for distributing y<sup>e</sup> churches contribution, as allso for y<sup>e</sup> too Sacrements, baptisme, and y<sup>e</sup> Lords supper, we doe wholly and in all points agree with y<sup>e</sup> French reformed churches, according to their publick confession of faith.

The oath of Supremacie we shall willingly take if it be required of us, and that conveniente satisfaction be not given by our taking y<sup>e</sup> oath of Alleagence.

John Rob:

William Brewster.

*Y<sup>e</sup> 2. was this.*

Touching y<sup>e</sup> Ecclesiasticall ministrie, &c. as in y<sup>e</sup> former, we agree in all things with the French reformed churches, according to their publick confession of faith; though some



small differences be to be found in our practices, not at all in ye substance of the things, but only in some accidentall circumstances.

1. As first, their ministers doe pray with their heads covered ours uncovered.
2. We chose none for Governing Elders but such as are able to teach which abilitie they doe not require.
3. Their elders & deacons are anu<sup>er</sup>all, or at most for 2. or 3. years; ours perpetuall.
4. Our elders doe administer their office in admonitions & excommunications for publick scandals, publickly & before ye congregation theirs more privately, & in their consistories.
5. We doe administer baptisme only to such infants as whereof y<sup>e</sup> one parente, at y<sup>e</sup> least, is of some church, which. some of ther Churches doe not observe; though in it our practice accords with their publick confession and y<sup>e</sup> judgmente of y<sup>e</sup> most larned amongst them.

Other differences, worthy mentioning, we know none in these points. Then aboute y<sup>e</sup> oath, as in y<sup>e</sup> former.

Subscribed,

John R.  
W. B.



**Robinson's Sermon upon the Conclusion of the Agreement to remove to New England.  
Bradford's Account.**

Upon y<sup>e</sup> receite of these things by one of their messengers, they had a sollemne meeting and a day of humiliation to seeke y<sup>e</sup> Lord for his direction; and their pastor tooke this texte, *1. Sam. 23, 3, 4. And David's men said unto him, see, we be afraid hear in Judah, how much more if we come to Kedah against y<sup>e</sup> host of the Philistines? Then David asked counsell of y<sup>e</sup> Lord againe, &c.* From which texte he taught many things very aptly, and befitting ther present occasion and condition, strengthing them against their fears and perplexities, and encouraging them in their resolutions. After which they concluded both what number and what persons should prepare themselves to goe with y<sup>e</sup> first; for all y<sup>t</sup> were willing to have gone could not gett ready for their other affairs in so shorte a time; neither if all could have been ready, had ther been means to have tra~~n~~sported them alltogether. Those that staid being y<sup>e</sup> greater number required y<sup>e</sup> pastor to stay with them; and indeede for other reasons he could not then well goe, and so it was y<sup>e</sup> more easilie yeelded unto. The other then desired y<sup>e</sup> elder, M<sup>r</sup>. Brewster, to goe with them, which was also condescended unto. It was also agreed on by mutuall consente and covenante, that those that went should be an absolute church of them selves, as well as those y<sup>t</sup> staid; seing in such a dangrous vioage, and a removall to such a distance, it might come to pass they should (for y<sup>e</sup> body of them) never meete againe in this world; yet with this proviso, that as any of y<sup>e</sup> rest came over to them, or of y<sup>e</sup> other returned upon occasion, they should be reputed as members without any further dismission or testimoniall. It was allso promised to those y<sup>t</sup> wente first, by y<sup>e</sup> body of y<sup>e</sup> rest, that if y<sup>e</sup> Lord gave them life, & mea~~n~~s, & opportunitie, they would come to them as soone as they could.

**Robinson's Sermon to the Pilgrims on their Departure from Leyden,<sup>1</sup> and the Farewell at Delfthaven. Bradford's Account.**

So being ready to departe, they had a day of solleme humiliation, their pastor taking his texte from [Ezra 8. 21](#). *And ther at y<sup>e</sup> river, by Ahava, I proclaimed a fast, that we might humble ourselves before our God, and seeke of him a right way for us, and for our children, and for all our substance.* Upon which he spent a good parte of y<sup>e</sup> day very profitably, and suitable to their presente occasion. The rest of the time was spent in powering out prairs to y<sup>e</sup> Lord with great fervencie, mixed with abundance of tears. And y<sup>e</sup> time being come that they must departe, they were accompanied with most of their brethren out of y<sup>e</sup> citie, unto a towne sundrie miles of called Delfes-Haven, wher the ship lay ready to receive them. So they lefte y<sup>t</sup> goodly & pleasante citie, which had been ther resting place near 12. years; but they knew they were pilgrimes, & looked not much on those things, but lift up their eyes to y<sup>e</sup> heavens, their dearest cuntrie, and quieted their spirits. When they came to y<sup>e</sup> place they found y<sup>e</sup> ship and all things ready; and shuch of their freinds as could not come with them followed after them, and sundrie also came from Amsterdame to see them shipte and to take their leave of them. That night was spent with litle sleepe by y<sup>e</sup> most, but with freindly entertainente & christian discourse and other reall expressions of true christian love. The next day, the wind being faire, they wente aborde, and their freinds with them, where truly dolfull was y<sup>e</sup> sight of that sade and mournfull parting; to see what sighs and sobbs and praies did sound amongst them, what tears did gush from every eye, & pithy speches peirst each harte; that sundry of y<sup>e</sup> Dutch strangers y<sup>t</sup> stood on ye key as spectators, could not refraine from tears. Yet comfortable & sweete it was to see shuch lively and true expressions of dear & unfained love. But y<sup>e</sup> tide (which stays for no man) caling them away y<sup>t</sup> were thus loath to departe, their Rev<sup>d</sup>: pastor falling downe on his knees, (and they all with him,) with watrie cheeks com<sup>d</sup>ended them with most fervente praies to the Lord and his blessing. And then with mutuall imbrases and many tears, they tooke their leaves one of an other; which proved to be y<sup>e</sup> last leave to many of them.



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1 Some scholars consider this the sermon referred to by Winslow; others place that "wholesome counsel" at Delfthaven.

## **Farewell Letter to the Pilgrims.**

Loving Christian friends, I doe hartily & in y<sup>e</sup> Lord salute you all, as being they with whom I am presente in my best affection, and most earnest longings after you, though I be constrained for a while to be bodily absente from you. I say constrained, God knowing how willingly, & much rather then otherwise, I would have borne my part with you in this first brunt, were I not by strong necessitie held back for y<sup>e</sup> present. Make accounte of me in y<sup>e</sup> mean while, as of a man devided in my selfe with great paine, and as (naturall bonds set a side) having my beter parte with you. And though I doubt not but in your godly wisdoms, you both foresee & resolve upon y<sup>t</sup> which concerneth your presente state & condition, both severally & joyntly, yet have I thought it but my duty to add some furdur spurr of provocation unto them, who rune allready, if not because you need it, yet because I owe it in love & dutie. And first, as we are daly to renew our repentance with our God, espetially for our sines known, and generally for our unknowne trespasses, so doth y<sup>e</sup> Lord call us in a singular maner upon occasions of shuch difficultie & danger as lieth upon you, to a both more narrow search & carefull reformation of your ways in his sight; least he, calling to remembrance our sines forgotten by us or unrepented of, take advantage against us, & in judgmente leave us for y<sup>e</sup> same to be swallowed up in one danger or other; wheras, on the contrary, sine being taken away by earnest repentance & y<sup>e</sup> pardon therof from ye Lord sealed up unto a mans conscience by his spirite, great shall be his securitie and peace in all dangers, sweete his comforts in all distreses, with hapie deliverance from all evill, whether in life or in death.

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Now next after this heavenly peace with God & our owne consciences, we are carefully to provide for peace with all men what in us lieth, espetially with our associats, & for y<sup>t</sup> watchfullnes must be had, that we neither at all in our selves doe give, no nor easily take offence being given by others. Woe be unto y<sup>e</sup> world for offences, for though it be necessarie (considering y<sup>e</sup> malice of Satan & mans corruption) that offences come, yet woe unto y<sup>e</sup> man or woman either by whom y<sup>e</sup> offence cometh, saith Christ, [Mat. 18. 7.](#) And if offences in y<sup>e</sup> unseasonable use of things in them selves indifferent, be more to be feared then death itselfe, as y<sup>e</sup> Apostle teacheth, [1. Cor. 9. 5.](#) how much more in things simply evill, in which neither honour of God nor love of man is thought worthy to be regarded. Neither yet is it sufficiente y<sup>t</sup> we keepe our selves by y<sup>e</sup> grace of God from giveing offence, excepte withall we be armed against y<sup>e</sup> taking of them when they be given by others. For how unperfect & lame is y<sup>e</sup> work of grace in y<sup>t</sup> person, who wants charitie to cover a multitude of offences, as y<sup>e</sup> scriptures speake. Neither are you to be exhorted to this grace only upon y<sup>e</sup> com~~mon~~one grounds of Christianitie, which are, that persons ready to take offence, either wante charitie, to cover offences, or wisdome duly to waigh humane frailtie; or lastly, are grosse, though close hipocrites, as Christ our Lord teacheth, [Mat. 7. 1, 2, 3,](#) as indeed in my owne experience,

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few or none have bene found which sooner give offence, then shuch as easily take it; neither have they ever proved sound & profitable members in societies, which have nurished this touchey humor. But besides these, ther are diverse motives provoking you above others to great care & conscience this way: As first, you are many of you strangers, as to y<sup>e</sup> persons, so to y<sup>e</sup> infirmities one of another, & so stand in neede of more watchfullnes this way, least when shuch things fall out in men & women as you suspected not, you be inordinately affected with them; which doth require at your hands much wisdome & charitie for y<sup>e</sup> covering & preventing of incident offences that way. And lastly, your intended course of civill comunitie will minister continuall occasion of offence, & will be as fuell for that fire, excepte you dilligently quench it with brotherly forbearance: And if taking of offence causlesly or easilie at mens doings be so carefully to be avoyded, how much more heed is to be taken y<sup>t</sup> we take not offence at God him selfe, which yet we certainly doe so ofte~~as~~ as we doe murmure at his providence in our crosses, or beare impatiently shuch afflictions as wherwith he pleaseth to visite us. Store up therefore patience against y<sup>e</sup> evill day, without which we take offence at y<sup>e</sup> Lord him selfe in his holy & just works.

A 4. thing ther is carfully to be provided for, to witte, that with your com~~one~~ employments you joyne com~~one~~ affections truly bente upon y<sup>e</sup> generall good, avoyding as a deadly plague of your both com~~one~~ & spetiall comfort all retirednes of minde for proper advantage, and all singularly affected any maner of way; let every man represe in him selfe & y<sup>e</sup> whol body in each person, as so many rebels against y<sup>e</sup> com~~one~~ good, all private respects of mens selves, not sorting with y<sup>e</sup> generall conveniencie. And as men are carfule not to have a new house shaken with any violence before it be well settled & y<sup>e</sup> parts firmly knite, so be you, I beseech you, brethren, much more carfull, y<sup>t</sup> the house of God which you are, and are to be, be not shaken with unnecessarie novelties or other oppositions at y<sup>e</sup> first settling therof.

Lastly, wheras you are become a body politik, using amongst your selves civill govermente, and are not furnished with any persons of spetiall eminencie above y<sup>e</sup> rest, to be chosen by you into office of goverment, let your wisdome & godlines appeare, not only in chusing shuch persons as doe entirely love and will promote y<sup>e</sup> com~~one~~ good, but also in yeelding unto them all due honour & obedience in their lawfull administrations not behoulding in them ye ordinarinesse of their persons, but Gods ordinance for your good, not being like ye foolish multitud who more honour y<sup>e</sup> gay coate, than either y<sup>e</sup> vertuous minde of y<sup>e</sup> man, or glorious ordinance of y<sup>e</sup> Lord. But you know better things, & that y<sup>e</sup> image of ye Lords power & authoritie which y<sup>e</sup> magistrate beareth, is honourable, in how meane persons soever. And this dutie you both may y<sup>e</sup> more willingly and ought y<sup>e</sup> more conscionably to performe, because you are at least for y<sup>e</sup> present to have only them for your ordinarie governours, which your selves shall make choyse of for that worke.



Sundrie other things of importance I could put you in minde of, and of those before mentioned, in more words, but I will not so farr wrong your godly minds as to thinke you heedless of these things, ther being also diverce among you so well able to admonish both them selves & others of what concerneth them. These few things therfore, & y<sup>e</sup> same in few words, I doe earnestly comēd unto your care & conscience, joyning therwith my daily incessante prayers unto y<sup>e</sup> Lord, y<sup>t</sup> he who hath made y<sup>e</sup> heavens & y<sup>e</sup> earth, y<sup>e</sup> sea and all rivers of waters, and whose providence is over all his workes, espetially over all his dear children for good, would so guide & gard you in your wayes, as inwardly by his Spirite, so outwardly by y<sup>e</sup> hand of his power, as y<sup>t</sup> both you & we also, for & with you, may have after matter of praising his name all y<sup>e</sup> days of your and our lives. Fare you well in him in whom you trust, and in whom I rest.

An unfained wellwiller of your hapie  
success in this hopeful! voyage,

John Robinson.

## Letter to John Carver.

My dear Brother,— I received inclosed in your last leter y<sup>e</sup> note of information, w<sup>ch</sup> I shall carefully keepe & make use of as ther shall be occasion. I have a true feeling of your perplexitie of mind & toyle of body, but I hope that you who have allways been able so plentifully to administer comforte unto others in their trials, are so well furnished for your selfe as that farr greater difficulties then you have yet undergone (though I conceive them to have been great enough) cannot oppresse you, though they press you, as y<sup>e</sup> Apostle speaks. The spirite of a. man (sustained by y<sup>e</sup> spirite of God) will sustaine his infirmitie, I dout not so will yours. And y<sup>e</sup> beter much when you shall injoye y<sup>e</sup> presence & help of so many godly & wise bretheren, for y<sup>e</sup> bearing of part of your burthen, who also will not admitte into their harts y<sup>e</sup> least thought of suspition of any y<sup>e</sup> least negligence, at least presumption, to have been in you, what so ever they thinke in others. Now what shall I say or write unto you & your goodwife my loving, sister? even only this, I desire (& allways shall) unto you from y<sup>e</sup> Lord, as unto my owne soule; and assure your selfe y<sup>t</sup> my harte is with you, and that I will not forslowe my bodily coming at y<sup>e</sup> first oppertunitie. I have writen a large leter to y<sup>e</sup> whole, and am sorie I shall not rather speak then write to them; & the more, considering ye wante of a preacher, which I shall also make some spurr to my hastening after you. I doe ever com~~end~~end my best affection unto you, which if I thought you made any doubte of, I would express in more, & y<sup>e</sup> same more ample & full words. And ye Lord in whom you trust & whom you serve ever in this bussines & journey, guid you with his hand, protecte you with his winge, and shew you & us his salvation in y<sup>e</sup> end, & bring us in y<sup>e</sup> mean while togeather in y<sup>e</sup> place desired, if shuch be his good will, for his Christs sake. Amen.

Yours, &c.

July 27. 1620.

Jo: R.



**To the Church of God, at Plymouth, in New England.**—[*Spelling modernized.*]

Much beloved brethren, neither the distance of place, not distinction of body, can at all either dissolve or weaken that bond of true Christian affection in which the Lord by his spirit hath tied us together. My continual prayers are to the Lord for you; my most earnest desire is unto you; from whom I will not longer keep (if God will) than means can be procured to bring with me the wives and children of divers of you and the rest of your brethren, whom I could not leave behind me without great both injury to you and them, and offence to God and all men. The death of so many our dear friends and brethren; oh! how grievous hath it been to you to bear, and to us to take knowledge of, which, if it could be mended with lamenting, could not sufficiently be bewailed; but we must go unto them and they shall not return unto us: And how many even of us God hath taken away here, and in England, since your departure, you may elsewhere take knowledge. But the same God has tempered judgment with mercy, as otherwise, so in sparing the rest, especially those by whose godly and wise government, you may be, and (I know) are so much helped. In a battle it is not looked for but that divers should die; it is thought well for a side, if it get the victory, though with the loss of divers, if not too many or too great. God, I hope, hath given you the victory, after many difficulties, for yourselves and others; though I doubt not, but many do and will remain for you and us all to strive with. Brethren, I hope I need not exhort you to obedience unto those whom God hath set over you, in church and commonwealth, and to the Lord in them. It is a Christian's honour, to give honour according to men's places; and his liberty, to serve God in faith, and his brethren in love orderly and with a willing and free heart. God forbid, I should need to exhort you to peace, which is the bond of perfection, and by which all good is tied together, and without which it is scattered. Have peace with God first, by faith in his promises, good conscience kept in all things, and oft renewed by repentance; and so, one with another, for his sake, who is, through three, one; and for Christ's sake who is one, and as you are called by one spirit to one hope. And the God of peace and grace and all goodness be with you, in all the fruits thereof, plenteously upon your heads, now and forever. All your brethren here remember you with great love, a general token whereof they have sent you.

Yours ever in the Lord,

John Robinson.

Leyden, June 30, Anno 1621.



## Letter to Governor Bradford.

My loving & much beloved freind, whom God hath hitherto preserved, preserve and keepe you still to his glorie, and y<sup>e</sup> good of many; that his blessing may make your godly and wise endeavours answerable to y<sup>e</sup> valuation which they ther have, & set upon y<sup>e</sup> same. Of your love too and care for us here, we never doubted; so are we glad to take knowledg of it in that fullnes we doe. Our love & care to and for you, is mutual!, though our hopes of coming unto you be small, and weaker then ever. But of this at large in M<sup>r</sup> Brewsters letter, with whom you, and he with you, mutually, I know, communicate your letters, as I desire you may doe these, &c.



Concerning y<sup>e</sup> killing of those poor Indeans,<sup>2</sup> of which we heard at first by reporte, and since by more certaine relation, oh! how happy a thing had it been, if you had converted some, before you had killed any; besids, wher bloud is one begune to be shed, it is seldome stanchd of a long time after. You will say they deserved it. I grant it; but upon what provocations and invitments by those heathenish Christians?<sup>3</sup> Besids, you, being no magistrats over them, were to consider, not what they deserved, but what you were by necessitie constrained to inflict. Necessitie of this, espetially of killing so many, (and many more, it seems, they would, if they could,) I see not. Methinks on or tow principals should have been full enough, according to that approved rule, The punishmente to a few, and y<sup>e</sup> fear to many. Upon this occasion let me be bould to exhorte you seriouly to consider of y<sup>e</sup> dispossition of your Captaine, whom I love, and am perswaded y<sup>e</sup> Lord in great mercie and for much good hath sent you him, if you use him aright. He is a man humble and meek amongst you, and towards all in ordinarie course. But now if this be meerly from an humane spirite, ther is cause to fear that by occasion, espetially of provocation, ther may be wanting y<sup>t</sup> tendernes of y<sup>e</sup> life of man (made after Gods image) which is meete. It is also a thing more glorious in mens eyes, then pleasing in Gods, or conveniente for Christians, to be a terrour to poore barbarous people; and indeed I am afraid least, by these occasions, others should be drawne to affecte a kind of ruffling course in the world. I doubt not but you will take in good part these things which I write, and as ther is cause make use of them. It were to us more comfortable and convenient, that we comunicated our mutuall helps in presence, but seeing that cannot be done, we shall always long after you, and love you, and waite Gods apoynted time. The adventurers it seems have neither money nor any great mind of us, for ye most parte. They deny it to be any part of y<sup>e</sup> covenants betwixte us, that they should tra~~n~~sporte

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2 At Wessagus, in March, 1622-3; it appears that the lives of seven Indians were taken in that encounter.

3 Mr. Weston's men.

us, neither doe I looke for any further help from them, till means come from you. We hear are strangers in effecte to y<sup>e</sup> whole course, and so both we and you (save as your owne wisdoms and worths have intressed you further) of principals intended in this bussines, are scarce accessaries, &c. My wife, with me, resaluts you & yours. Unto him who is y<sup>e</sup> same to his in all places, and nere to them which are farr from one an other, I comend you and all with you, resting,

Yours truly loving,

Leyden, Des: 19. 1623.

John Robinson.



## Letter to Elder Brewster.

Loving and dear freind and brother: That which I most desired of God in regard of you, namely, y<sup>e</sup> continuance of your life and health, and the safe coming of these sent unto you, that I most gladly hear of, and praise God for the same. And I hope M<sup>rs</sup>. Brewsters weake and decayed state of body will have some repairing by the coming of her daughters,<sup>4</sup> and the provissions in this and former ships, I hear is made for you; which maks us with more patience bear our languishing state, and y<sup>e</sup> deferring of our desired transportation; w<sup>ch</sup> I call desired, rather than hoped for, whatsoever you are borne in hand by any others. For first, ther is no hope at all, that I know, or can conceive of, of any new stock to be raised for that end; so that all must depend upon returns from you, in which are so many uncertainties, as that nothing with any certaintie can thence be concluded. Besids, howsoever for y<sup>e</sup> presente the adventurers alegd nothing but want of money, which is an invincible difficulty, yet if that be taken away by you, others without doubtbe will be found. For the beter clearing of this, we must dispose y<sup>e</sup> adventurers into 3. parts; and of them some 5. or 6. (as I conceive) are absolutly bent for us, above any others. Other 5. or 6. are our bitter professed adversaries. The rest, being the body, I conceive to be honestly minded, & loveingly also towards us; yet such as have others (namly y<sup>e</sup> forward preachers) nerer unto them, then us, and whose course so farr as ther is any differance, they would rather advance then ours. Now what a hank<sup>5</sup> these men have over y<sup>e</sup> professors, you know. And I perswade my selfe, that for me, they of all others are unwilling I should be transported, espetially such of them as have an eye that way them selves; as thinking if I come ther, ther market will be mard in many regards. And for these adversaries, if they have but halfe y<sup>e</sup> witte to their malice, they will stope my course when they see it intended, for which this delaying serveth them very opportunly. And as c ne restie jade can hinder, by hanging back, more then two or 3. can (or will at least, if they be not very free) draw forward, so will it be in this case. A. notable experimete of this, they gave in your messengers presence, constraining y<sup>e</sup> company to promise that none of the money now gathered should be expended or imployed to y<sup>e</sup> help of any of us towards you. Now touching y<sup>e</sup> question propounded by you, I judg it not lawfull for you, being a ruling Elder, as [Rom. 12. 7. 8.](#) & [1. Tim. 5. 17.](#) opposed to the Elders that teach & exhorte and labore in ye word and doctrine, to which ye sacrements are annexed, to administer them, nor convenient if it were lawfull. Whether any lamed man will come unto you or not, I know not if any doe, you must *consiliū capere in arena*. Be you most hardly saluted, & you<sup>r</sup> wife with you, both from me & mine. Your God & ours, and y<sup>e</sup> God of all his, bring us



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4 Fear and Patience, who came in the Anne, in 1623.

5 Hank, influence.

together if it be his will, & keep us in the mean while, and allways to his glory, and make us servisable to his majestie, and faithfull to the end. Amen.

Your very loving brother,

Leyden, Des: 20. 1623.

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John Robinson.

## **Bradford's Account of Robinson's Death, with Letter from Roger White.**

About y<sup>e</sup> beginning of Aprill [1626] they heard of Captain Standish his arrivall, and sent a boat to fetch him home, and y<sup>e</sup> things he had brought. Welcome he was, but y<sup>e</sup> news he broughte was sadd in many regards; not only in regarde of the former losses, before related, which their freinds had suffered, by which some in a maner were undon, others much disabled from doing any further help, and some dead of y<sup>e</sup> plague, but also y<sup>t</sup> M<sup>r</sup>. Robinson, their pastor, was dead, which struck them with much sorrow & sadnes, as they had cause. His and their adversaries had been long & continually plotting how they might hinder his coming hither, but y<sup>e</sup> Lord had appointed him a better place; concerning whose death & the maner therof, it will appere by these few lines write to y<sup>e</sup> Gov<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>r</sup>. Brewster.

Loving & kind frinds, &c. I know not whether this will ever come to your hands, or miscarie, as other my letters have done; yet in regard of y<sup>e</sup> Lords dealing with us hear, I have had a great desire to write unto you, knowing your desire to bear a parte with us, both in our joyes, & sorrows, as we doe w<sup>th</sup> you. These are therfore to give you to understand, that it hath pleased the Lord to take out of this vaell of tears, your and our loving & faithfull pastor, and my dear & Reve<sup>d</sup> brother, M<sup>r</sup>. John Robinson, who was sick some 8. days. He begane to be sick on Saturday in y<sup>e</sup> morning, yet y<sup>e</sup> next day (being the Lords day) he taught us twice. And so ye weeke after grew weaker, every day more then other; yet he felt no paine but weaknes all ye time of his sicknes. The phisick he tooke wrought kindly in mans judgmente, but he grew weaker every day, feeling litle or no paine, and sensible to y<sup>e</sup> very last. He fell sicke y<sup>e</sup> 22. of Feb: and departed this life y<sup>e</sup> 1. of March. He had a continuall inwarde ague, but free from infection, so y<sup>t</sup> all his freinds came freely to him. And if either prayers, tears, or means, would have saved his life, he had not gone hence. But he having faithfully finished his course, and performed his worke which y<sup>e</sup> Lord had appointed him here to doe, he now resteth with y<sup>e</sup> Lord in eternall hapines. We wanting him & all Church Gov<sup>rs</sup>, yet we still (by y<sup>e</sup> mercie of God) continue & hould close together, in peace and quietnes; and so hope we shall doe, though we be very weake. Wishing (if such were ye will of God) that you & we were againe united together in one, either ther or here; but seeing it is y<sup>e</sup> will of y<sup>e</sup> Lord thus to dispose of things, we must labour w<sup>th</sup> patience to rest contented, till it please y<sup>e</sup> Lord otherwise to dispose. For news, is here not much; only as in England we have lost our old king James, who departed this life aboute a month agoe, so here they have lost ye old prince, Grave Mourise; who both departed this life since my brother Robinson. And as in England we have a new-king Charls, of whom ther is great hope, so hear they have made prince Hendrick Generall in his brothers place, &c. Thus with my love remembred, I take leave & rest,

Your assured loving freind,

Roger White.

Leyden, Aprill 28.

An<sup>o</sup>: 1625.

Thus these too great princes, and their pastor, left this world near aboute one time. Death maks no difference. . . .

Their other freinds from Leyden writ many leters to them full of sad laments for ther heavie loss; and though their wills were good to come to them, yet they saw no probabilitie of means, how it might be effected, but concluded (as it were)that all their hopes were cutt of; and many, being aged, begane to drop away by death.



## Bradford's Tributes to Robinson.

Yea such was y<sup>e</sup> mutuall love, & reciprocall respecte that this worthy man had to his flocke, and his flocke to him, that it might be said of them as it once was of y<sup>t</sup> famouse Emperour Marcus Aurelious, and y<sup>e</sup> people of Rome, that it was hard to judge wheather he delighted more in haveing shuch a people, or they in haveing such a pastor. His love was greate towards them, and his care was all ways bente for their best good, both for soule and body; for besids his singuler abilities in devine things (wherin he excelled), he was also very able to give directions in civill affaires, and to foresee dangers & inconveniences; by w<sup>ch</sup> means he was very helpfull to their outward estats, & so was every way as a commone father unto them. And none did more offend him then those that were close and cleaving to them selves, and retired from y<sup>e</sup> commōe good; as also such as would be stiffe & riged in matters of outward order, and invey against y<sup>e</sup> evils of others, and yet be remisse in them selves, and not so carefull to express a vertuous conversation. They in like maner had ever a reverente regard unto him, & had him in precious estimation, as his worth & wisdom did deserve; and though they esteemed him highly whilst he lived & laboured amongst them, yet much more after his death, when they came to feele y<sup>e</sup> wante of his help, and saw (by woefull experience) what a treasure they had lost, to y<sup>e</sup> greefe of their harts, and wounding of their sowl; yea such a loss as they saw could not be repaired; for it was as hard for them to find such another leader and feeder in all respects, as for ye Taborits to find another Ziska.<sup>6</sup> And though they did not call themselves orphans, as the other did, after his death, yet they had cause as much to lamente, in another regard, their present condition, and after usage.—*From Bradford's Journal.*

Mr. John Robinson was pastor of that famous church of Leyden, in Holland; a man not easily to be paralleled for all things, whose singular virtues we shall not take upon us here to describe. Neither need we, for they so well are known both by friends and enemies. As he was a man learned and of solid judgment and of a quick and sharp wit, so was he also of a tender conscience and very sincere in all his ways, a hater of hypocrisy and dissimulation, and would be very plain with his best friends. He was very courteous, affable, and sociable in his conversation, and towards his own people especially. He was an acute and expert disputant, very quick and ready, and had much bickering with the Arminians, who stood more in fear of him than any of the university. He was never satisfied in himself until he had searched any cause or argument he had to deal in thoroughly and to the bottom. And we have heard him sometimes say to his familiars that many times, both in writing and disputation, he knew he had sufficiently answered others, but many times not himself; and was ever desirous of any light, and the more able, learned, and holy the persons were, the

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6 John Ziska, the Hussite, the blind general and leader of the Bohemian insurgents, who was never defeated.

more he desired to confer and reason with them. He was very profitable in his ministry and comfortable to his people. He was much beloved of them, and as loving was he unto them, and entirely sought their good for soul and body. In a word, he was much esteemed and revered of all that knew him, and his abilities (were acknowledged) both of friends and strangers.—*From Bradford's First Dialogue; spelling modernized.*

The words of John Robinson here brought together are chiefly the letters, messages, and reports of addresses preserved by Bradford and Winslow, the words not embodied in the three-volume edition of Robinson's works. Those volumes, published in 1851, were edited with a memoir by Robert Ashton, secretary of the Congregational Board, London. They contain Robinson's more important theological and controversial works,—*"Defence of the Doctrine propounded by the Synod of Dort," "A Justification of Separation from the Church of England," "The People's Plea for the Exercise of Prophecy,"* etc., and also the essays written during the last part of Robinson's life, and published in the year of his death, 1625, republished in 1628 and 1642. These essays, far too little read, are sixty-two in number, upon a great variety of subjects,—*Man's Knowledge of God, Authority and Reason, Heresy and Schism, Wisdom and Folly, Books and Writings, Riches and Poverty, Marriage, Youth and Old Age,* etc.

John Robinson, the pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers, who, more than any other, influenced and formed the founders of Plymouth, has until this latest time been very inadequately treated by our historical scholars, although having due recognition in the general histories of the Pilgrim Fathers. Dr. Henry Martyn Dexter devoted a careful chapter to his services in his invaluable work on *"Congregationalism as seen in its Literature"*; and Edward Arber reprinted various important words of his, especially showing his kind feeling toward the Church of England, in his *"Story of the Pilgrim Fathers."* Just as this leaflet is prepared, however (1903), there is published the scholarly and thorough volume, *"John Robinson, the Pilgrim Pastor,"* by Rev. Ozora S. Davis, which fully meets the need which has so long been felt. To this work the student is referred for completest information concerning one who was not merely the great early representative of the Congregational polity of the fathers of New England, but a cardinal force in our early political life.

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